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## **MINORITY MEDIA IN HUNGARY AND SLOVENIA: A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT**

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## 1. Introduction

Minority media are often treated in passing, amounting to a few paragraphs-long considerations in documents devoted to minority rights. Specific studies of minority media systems, moreover comparative, cross-country accounts, are in short supply. The multifarious character of minority media poses a challenge to those seeking to understand their dynamic. How they come about and what impact they have is influenced by the economic and social situation of minorities, their size and geographical distribution, the education and language legislation existing in one country, even by international or supra-national factors (such as the enlargement of the European Union for example) - and the list is far from exhaustive.

By focusing on minority media systems in Hungary and Slovenia and the factors that shape(d) them, this paper constitutes a step (within its limited scope) in meeting this challenge. It does not propose any definite answers; neither can it address all the factors mentioned above. Rather, the aim is more modest. Starting from the observation the state plays a central role in subsidizing and regulating minority media in democracies<sup>1</sup>, this study focuses on the state – minority media dynamics. More precisely, it examines the main actors involved, the broader legal and institutional structures within which they interact, and the resources available within these structures, as well as within minority communities, in order to better understand the aspect of minority media systems in Slovenia and Hungary.

### 1.1 Why minority media?

For those committed to the principles of liberal democracy in multiethnic societies, narrowing the focus on minority media is a valuable exercise for a number of reasons. Firstly, because of the symbolic aspect of those outlets, which can act as an expression of a particular identity, as witnesses of the very fact of ethnic diversity in a given territory. Secondly, because minority media provide a means to preserve distinct ethnic identities, notably by enhancing access to minority languages and facilitating the dissemination of minority customs, traditions, culture and history. Finally, minority media can be a condition for the full and effective participation of members of minorities in all spheres of public life, both at the local and national level. Graham

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<sup>1</sup> The case studies included in Frachon and Vargaftig (1995), Husband (1994) and Riggins (1992) provide ample illustration of this.

Murdoch ((1992, 92), quoted in Husband (1994, 6)) gives three conditions for the realization of this last function of minority media:

- 1) Access to information, so that members of ethnic minority groups know what their rights are and how to exercise them in an effective way;
- 2) Access to a broad range of debates and interpretations of the information circulated, as well as access to communication channels so that they can convey their opinions, propose alternatives, etc.;
- 3) The capacity to recognize themselves and their aspirations in the range of representations offered in mainstream media and be able to contribute “to developing and extending these representations”.

This formulation of the functions, potential or real, of minority media is not unique. In his account, Higgins considers the combined influence of external and internal structures of support of minority groups on minority media. He then examines whether minority media characteristics enable (or prevent) them to achieve their overarching goal, namely the “peaceful preservation of linguistic and cultural identity of a population that political and economic factors have put in a threatened position”(Higgins 1992b, 287).

Without aiming to choose or supply the ultimate definition minority media functions, this paper relies on the guidelines provided by Higgins and Murdoch to assess the support structure of Slovenian and Hungarian minority media and their impact on the aspect and content of minority outlets. It will also offer cautious insights about the function of minority media in the two countries. The term cautious is important here; any attempt to provide a complete account of the state of minority media runs into the obstacle of access to information. Data pertaining to minority media is scattered between the various agencies involved, directly or indirectly, in producing, supporting, regulating, monitoring minority outlets. Where there are no obligatory registration process (as in the case in Hungary), it is impossible to be certain that a list includes all minority media. Also, it is not rare to encounter lack of transparency with respect to financial information on the part of certain state actors. In addition to the usual constraints of time and resources, access to key people can also be restricted; no matter how enthusiastic, a researcher cannot force somebody to give information or an interview. Finally, with respect to the evaluation of minority media function, caution applies as the objective assessment of phenomena like participation and assimilation poses serious difficulties (e.g. how to measure empirically a community’s political empowerment by its media?). Given the state of the available data in the countries under study, minority media effects cannot be effectively isolated from that of other factors.

This paper does not have for objective to provide and use a definite or objective yardstick against which to measure the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of minority media. Rather, following Higgins,

the paper starts from the premises that minority media are mostly affected by state policies, but that minority media success also depends on minority communities' actions and interpretations. Hence, in addition to various legal and policy documents, reports by governments, non-governmental and international organizations, as well as academic literature about minorities media, the research is based on more than 30 interviews carried out in Fall 2002 with minority media professionals, minority leaders and government bodies' representatives.<sup>2</sup> The study tackles the following questions:

- a) What kind of minority media exists in Slovenia and Hungary and who are the main actors?
- b) What resources are available to them?
- c) What insights can we gain about the relationship between the supporting structure of minority media (regulations; funding process; etc.) and their output?

Lastly, with the guidelines set out by Higgins and Murdoch in the background, the paper will also attempt to (cautiously) shed light on the impact of minority media dynamics in Slovenia and Hungary.

The paper is divided in three main parts. The first provides an overview of minority groups in terms of size, geographical and socio-economic situation. It also briefly examines the nature of minority-majority relations in both countries. The second part of the paper presents print and broadcast minority media and the main elements of the legal and institutional framework they operate in. The third part is devoted to the mechanisms of minority media funding. It considers the resources available to minority outlets and media content as a result of opportunities and constraints. Finally, minority media functions in Slovenia and Hungary are considered and policy recommendations are formulated in the concluding part of the paper.

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<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to all interviewees for their time and collaboration to this project. In many cases, we communicated via an interpreter. The author takes full responsibility for eventual errors of facts or interpretation. The research was carried out during a fellowship at the Mirovni Institute in Ljubljana. The author especially thanks Alexandra Banjanac-Lubej, Brankica Petkovic and Tomaz Trplan for their help during field research in Slovenia.

## 2. Facts and figures

The structures of minority media systems in a given country are determined by a host of factors, both internal and external to minority groups. The most obvious among external factors is perhaps the state's financial support and regulations. However, the policies towards minority media are themselves conditioned by 'hard facts' such as the size and geographical concentration of minorities, their socio-economic status, the degree of distinctiveness or of assimilation to the majority population, eventual minority claims to cultural and/or political autonomy, etc. (Higgins 1992, 16).<sup>3</sup> Before embarking upon a description of media minority in Hungary and in Slovenia, the following section provides information about the minority groups concerned by this study<sup>4</sup> and the context that they live in.

### 1.1 Slovenia

Slovenia counts three officially recognized minorities: Hungarian (8,500), Italian (3,000), and Roma (6,500-10,000).<sup>5</sup> The country is also home to Croats, Serbs and Bosnians<sup>6</sup>, who came when war broke out in ex-Yugoslavia or were already established in Slovenia when the country declared its independence in 1991. Hungarians and Italians benefit from well-defined, extensive rights (bilingual education and administration, parliamentary representation, etc.), laid out in article 64 of the Constitution. The Roma minority is the object of a separate article, which indicates that the "status and special rights of the Romany community living in Slovenia shall be regulated by law" (Constitution of Slovenia, art. 65). So far, no specific law about the rights of Roma has been passed.<sup>7</sup> Thirdly, the so-called 'new minorities' – namely groups from former Yugoslavia – do not

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<sup>3</sup> That is not to say that these 'hard facts' are fully fixed or that government policies cannot/do not alter them over time.

<sup>4</sup> The minority groups considered in this paper are recognized as such by the state they live in and/or receive subsidies for minority media or connected activities.

<sup>5</sup> The source for the Italian and Hungarian communities population is the 1991 census (numbers have been rounded up). According to the 1991 census, there are 2,293 Roma in Slovenia but more recent estimates put their number in the 6,500-10,000 bracket - see the Commission of European Communities' 2002 Regular Report on Slovenia's Progress Towards Accession (2002, 27); OSI (2001, 495, 528).

<sup>6</sup> The 1991 census reports 54,200 Croats, 47,900 Serbs and 26,800 'Slav Muslims' living in Slovenia. The results of the 2001 census were not available yet at the time of writing but there were registered Macedonian, Albanian and Montenegrin associations according to information provided by the Ministry of Culture's Department for Minority Activities.

<sup>7</sup> How article 65 of the Constitution is to be interpreted is subject to controversy. Miran Komac says it is wrong to understand it as a prescription to pass a law on Roma; rather "it says that Roma issues are to be dealt with legally, and that is the approach that Slovenia has chosen by including provisions about Roma in its education law, its media law, etc." The differentiated level of minority protection granted to Hungarians and Italians on the one hand and to Roma on the other has also been addressed in reports by EU institutions (see OSI 2001, 495).

have the status of official minority. Until the results of the 2001 census are made public, it is problematical to estimate how many people from the former Yugoslav republics live in Slovenia. The president of the Bosnian Cultural Union of Slovenia (*Bosnjaska kulturna zveza Slovenije*) Hasan Basic estimates that they constitute 10% of the country's population<sup>8</sup> (just under two million people).

The terms 'autochthonous' and 'non-autochthonous' are often used to distinguish between minorities that were already present in the country before the Yugoslav episode and groups that settled in afterwards. Thus legal documents (including the Constitution) refer to the Hungarians and Italians as 'autochthonous communities'. After 1991, the distinction was extended to apply within the Roma community (distinguishing between Roma who have been living in Slovenia for decades and those who recently came from Bosnia, Serbia and Kosovo).<sup>9</sup> Miran Komac, researcher at the Institute for Ethnic Studies, favours the term 'classical' minorities to refer to the Italian and Hungarian communities. According to Komac, the autochthonous/non-autochthonous dichotomy is incoherent, notably in the light of frequent border changes between Italy and Slovenia. As a consequence, Italians who settled in the country as late as after the Second World War are considered to be more 'autochthonous' than Croats who have been living in Slovenia for a longer period of time.

## 2.2 Hungary

In 1993, the Act on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities (hereafter, the Minorities Act) recognized 13 minority groups established in Hungary for 100 year or more. The Minorities Act defines means to implement minority rights granted by article 68 of the Hungarian Constitution.<sup>10</sup> The Roma community is by far the largest minority with some 190,000 self-declared

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Hasan Basic, 2 October 2002, Ljubljana.

<sup>9</sup> A number of laws protecting the rights of Roma in the domain of education and local government exclude 'non-autochthonous' Roma even if they are Slovenian citizens. For example, article 39 of the law on Local Self-Government (1993) states that « where autochthonous Roma live, the Roma will have at least one representative in the municipal council ». In 2001, following a suit initiated by a Roma from Novo Mesto who was told the locality did not set seats aside for Roma representatives, the Supreme Court ruled that article 39 is unconstitutional in two respects: firstly, it fails to specify how the rule of setting seats aside for Roma representatives is to be concretely implemented. Secondly, the Court ruled that the distinction between autochthonous and non-autochthonous can not be upheld as long as no official definition of these terms exists (see Constitutional Watch – Slovenia, in *East European Constitutional Review* vol. 10, no. 3, 2001; see also the 2001 Annual Report of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Slovenia, chapter 2, [www.varuh-rs.si](http://www.varuh-rs.si))

<sup>10</sup> Article 68 states that :

-The national and ethnic minorities living in the Republic of Hungary participate in the sovereign power of the people : they represent a constituent part of the State.

members in 2001; estimates put their real number in the region of half a million (Kovacs 2001, 3). Germans (62,233), Slovaks (17,692) and Croats (15,620), followed by Romanians (7,995), are the next largest minorities. The other minorities count 5,000 members or less: Ukrainians (5,070), Serbs (3,816), Slovenes (3,040), Poles (2,962), Greeks (2,509), Bulgarians (1,358) and Ruthenians (1,098). The smallest minority is made up by the Armenian community with just 620 members.<sup>11</sup>

All minorities save the Roma are well integrated into Hungarian society. In fact, one objective of the Minorities Act has been to halt and reverse an assimilation process well under way (Walsh 2000, 23).<sup>12</sup> One reproach addressed to the Act is that it does not tackle the specificity of the social and economic situation of the Roma; far from being integrated, many Roma face discrimination, marginalisation and poverty.<sup>13</sup>

### **2.3 Relationship between minorities and majorities**

Minority groups also differ with respect to how they are perceived by majority populations. In both countries, Roma are subject to discrimination.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, in Slovenia, differentiated perceptions apply to ‘new minorities’ as opposed to other minority groups. Such differences are reflected in, among other fora, mainstream media discourse about minorities. Alleged rural origins and backwardness has been the main thrust of prejudices expressed in majority outlets towards new minorities, notably Bosnians. A common perception also associates Serbs with the violent breakup of former Yugoslavia<sup>15</sup>. Tonci Kuzmanic (1999) compiled excerpts from a column entitled

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-The Republic of Hungary shall provide for the protection of national and ethnic minorities and ensure their collective participation in public affairs, foster their cultures, the use of their native languages, education in their native languages and the use of names in their native languages.

-The laws of the Republic of Hungary shall ensure representation for the national and ethnic minorities living within the country.

-National and ethnic minorities shall have the right to form national bodies for self-government.

-A majority of two thirds of the vote of the Members of Parliament present is required to pass the law on the rights of national and ethnic minorities.

<sup>11</sup> Data provided by the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities Office, based on Hungarian Statistics Office data. The numbers in parentheses pertain to self-declared minority affiliation rather than mother tongue (of which the number of speakers, for some minority groups, significantly differs from that of ethnic affiliation. Notably, the German, Slovak, Armenian - and of course Roma - languages are spoken by less people than those who claim the ethnic identity.

<sup>12</sup> A report of the Council of Europe on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in Hungary states that most minority language speakers in the country live in a situation of ‘diglossia’, namely that Hungarian is their main communication language. Furthermore, it estimates that between 40 and 60% of minority language speakers are married to native Hungarian speakers and that the minority language is usually not transferred to the next generation. Except for Roma and German, all other languages are in decline (Council of Europe 2001, 6).

<sup>13</sup> See the chapter about Hungary in the *Monitoring the EU Accession Process: Minority Protection* report for 2002 ([www.eumap.org](http://www.eumap.org)). See also Krizsan (2001) for more about discrimination against Roma in Hungary.

<sup>14</sup> For an analysis of mainstream media discourse about Roma in Slovenia, see Erjavec, Hrvatin and Kelbl (2000). For a short description of the general situation of Roma in Slovenia, see Komac (1999, 71-5)

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Miran Komac.



‘Nightwatch’ published weekly in the Sunday edition of *Delo*, one of the two major Slovenian dailies, between 1995 and 1998. Perceived as a threat to Slovenian identity, people from former Yugoslav Republic are labeled “southern thieves”, “Yugoviches”, “Yugobums” “Mujaheddins” and “warriors”, likened as a group to “stock from the south” because of which Slovenia “increasingly stinks of the Balkans” (Kuzmanic 1999, 35-9).

A study of local newspaper discourse in the town of Ozd in Northern Hungary<sup>16</sup> (an economically depressed area with the highest proportion of Roma) analyzed how housing issues were ‘framed’. The media discourse, more technical and lacking references to inhabitants’ ethnic background at the beginning of the 1990s, increasingly emphasized the ethnicity of the “deviant elements” (i.e. Roma who refuse to integrate to the majority) inhabiting certain of the town’s neighborhoods and blocks (Vidra 2001).

Media professionals interviewed in Slovenia and Hungary reported a good or “normal” relationship between minorities and majority populations (with the exception of interviewees involved in Roma and new minorities media activities). In most cases, this relationship is a ‘non-issue’ in the sense that it is not ‘problematized’. The general ignorance and indifference of the majority towards its minorities has an impact on tolerance and openness of the society, believes Mihaly Balasz, editor-in-chief of the Croatian television program and deputy director of Hungarian Public Television studio in Pecs. It prevents members of minorities, “who otherwise can live a good life”, to feel completely accepted beyond the limits of their town or their region. “It is not true that people like me have two mother countries; sometimes, they feel like they have none”, adds Balasz.

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<sup>16</sup> Housing is one of the areas where discrimination occurs most frequently towards Roma (see Krizsan 2001).

### 3. Minority Print and Broadcast Media

Two broad strategies towards minority media can be identified: parallel minority media, namely separate outlets for minorities, or integration of minority programs, topics, journalists, etc., into mainstream media. The two strategies are not mutually exclusive; most developed minority media support systems exhibit elements of both (Husband 1994; Riggins 1992). That is also the case in Slovenia and Hungary. In both countries, most minority broadcast outlets operate within the public service broadcasting system (i.e. 'state' radio and television networks). Inside this frame, Slovenia's minority channels and stations are mostly separate outlets. In Hungary, minority programs are integrated into the main state channel/state programming. In the case of print media, minorities self-governing bodies and associations are important actors on the media scene, where they have typically established separate outlets.

Slovenian and Hungarian minority media thus operate a particular legal and institutional framework - mainly that of the public service media system and of the minority representation system.<sup>17</sup> In the Hungarian case, some outlets owe their appearance on the scene to the minority representation framework. The dual goal of this part of the paper is to present minority media in Slovenia and Hungary, along with the main elements of the legal-institutional context they operate in. Although some regulations and a number of institutional actors play a role in both print and broadcast minority media, the two types of outlets are dealt with separately.

#### **3.1 Print media in Slovenia**

In Slovenia, the Ministry of Culture's Department for Cultural Activities of the Italian and the Hungarian Ethnic Minorities, Romany Community, and Other Ethnic Minority Groups and Immigrants in the Republic of Slovenia (hereafter, Department for Minority Cultural Activities), as well as the Office for Nationalities are the two public agencies that support in a large part minority media. As the name of the Department for Minority Cultural Activities indicates, minority media are subsumed under the larger category of minority cultural activities (such as theater plays, the acquisition of children's books in minority languages, folklore festivals, web pages of minority associations, etc.). The Department subsidizes mostly print media; the Office for Nationalities is more prominent in the field of electronic minority media, where it supports (partly) RTV Slovenia

minority programs as well as a number of Roma media initiatives at the local level (see section 2.3 below).

*Table 1: Print media in Slovenia*

<b>Minority (owner/controlling organization)</b>	<b>Publication</b>
Italian (Union of Italians)	La Voce del Popolo (1944; circulation: 4,000 in Croatia and Slovenia)
Hungarian (Institute for Information)	Nepujsag (1959; circulation: 1,800)
Local councils	<i>Lendvai hirado/Lendavske novice</i> (Lendava) <i>Barazdak/Brazde</i> (Dobrovnik) <i>Newsletters</i> (in Piran, Isola and Koper)
Roma (Union of Roma)	Romano Them (1996; circulation: 500) <i>Romske Novice</i> (Murska Sobota)
Serbian (Association of Serbs of Slovenia)	Beseda
Bosnian (Bosnian Cultural Association of Slovenia)	Bosnjak (1999; circulation: 2,000)

Note: Titles in italics are local publications; the year the publication was established and circulation, when available, are indicated in parentheses.

The daily *La Voce del Popolo*, established in Croatia at the end of the Second World War as an antifascist newspaper, caters to the Italian minority of Istria (a region overlapping Croatia and Slovenia). It is sold together with an Italian daily, *Il Piccolo*. Its newsroom is based in Rijeka (Croatia), with one correspondent in Slovenia. *La Voce del Popolo* was formally owned by the Croatian government until 2001; the paper is now controlled by the Union of Italians, a minority association based in Croatia.<sup>18</sup> The Union appoints the paper's board members, which in turn nominate the editor-in-chief. Besides advertisement revenues (approximately 50% of the daily's revenues), the paper is supported by the Croatian and Slovenian governments, in proportions of 80 and 20% respectively according to *La Voce*'s Slovenian correspondent Claude Moscarda.<sup>19</sup> The funds are directly granted to the paper by both governments. *La Voce* also receives support from Italy, mostly to buy software and computers. Articles about the Slovenian Italian minority are scattered rather than concentrated in one page or section of the daily. According to its Ljubljana-based journalist, the newspaper has little audience in Slovenia (roughly 300 copies sold daily -

<sup>17</sup> This by no means minimizes the role of minorities themselves: although the state provides the means to set up and operate minority media, "success may ultimately depends most on actions undertaken by minority communities themselves" (Riggins 1992a, 8).

<sup>18</sup> The Union was the official association of the Italian minority in former Yugoslavia. In Slovenia, the officially recognized association of the Italian minority is Obalna Skupnost (Littoral Association).

Komac 1999, 55) and only modest significance in political terms. Moscarda compares it to a “decoration”, adding that the Italian radio is more popular and carries greater influence. In addition to *La Voce*, the Union of Italians publishes a weekly (*Panorama*), a literary magazine (*La Battana*) and a children’s newsletter (*Arcobaleno*) (Komac 1999, 55). Also, local newsletters are published in the three ethnically mixed towns of Piran (Pirano), Izola (Isola) and Koper (Capodistria).

The Hungarian weekly *Nepujsag* is published in Prekmurje (Muravidek, in Hungarian), the region bordering Hungary in Eastern Slovenia. The paper, in circulation since 1959<sup>20</sup>, is now published by the Institute for Information, established in 1993 with the mission to inform the Hungarian community. The staff of the weekly, employed by the Institute, also prepares bilingual municipal newsletters for two of the four ethnically mixed localities. Most of the 1,800 copies of *Nepujsag* are distributed by subscription. Three-quarter of the paper’s budget comes from the Slovenian government; the funds are awarded to the Institute for Information, which then decides which projects it funds. Following a public tender, the editor-in-chief of the weekly is appointed by the board of the Institute for Information which is composed of three journalists, two representatives of the self-governing Hungarian community and one representative of the public.

The Roma magazine *Romano Them* started out in 1996 and three issues were published until 1998.<sup>21</sup> The frequency of publication increased since then; in 2002, the magazine came out three times. The founder and editor-in-chief (also president of the Union of Roma Associations and of the Roma Association of Murska Sobota) Jozek Horvat-Muc is satisfied with the current rate of publication, as he judges that “the situation does not require a more frequent publication.” A grant from the Department for Minority Cultural Activities as well as from the Office for Nationalities (at least since 2001) covers printing costs but not salaries. In addition, the local newsletter *Romske Novice* appears once a year at the initiative of the Roma Association of Murska Sobota. With the support of the Department of Minority Cultural Activities and the local authorities, approximately 300 copies are distributed in Murska Sobota and its surroundings. Both *Romano Them* and *Romske Novice* are mainly written in Slovenian, also featuring a few texts translated in Romani.

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Claude Moscarda, Ljubljana, 7 October 2002. Kotnik (2002) gives the same proportion, adding that the Slovenian government share, provided by the Office for Nationalities, amounted to 23.5 million tollars in 2002 (approximately 100,000 USD).

<sup>20</sup> The paper started out in 1956 as a supplement to the local newspaper *Pomurski Vestnik* (Komac 1999, 53).

<sup>21</sup> Former Yugoslavia had a relatively strong tradition of Roma media. Galhus (1999) quote the editor of a Roma newspaper in Belgrade in 1932. Yugoslavia was the only country in the region where Roma were acknowledged as a nationality as early as in 1981, thus granting the community some of the rights enjoyed by others minority groups (Barany 1998, 18).

Like *Romano Them*, the Bosnian magazine *Bosnjak* is written by a team of volunteers. Its editor-in-chief is the president of the Bosnian Cultural Union of Slovenia, an umbrella organization for 12 associations. Since May 2000, the magazine is published three to four times a year with the support of the Department for Minority Cultural Activities. The funds received from the Department, along with limited advertisement revenues, are sufficient to cover printing costs.

Finally, *Beseda* is a bulletin published irregularly by the association 'Serbian Community' of Slovenia.<sup>22</sup> In 2002, Croatian and Albanian associations also received funds from the Department for Minority Cultural Activities for internet-based publications.

### 3.2 Print Media in Hungary

Hungary has had minority media for decades as well. The country inherited from its communist past a number of minority institutions and activities, but to a lesser extent than Slovenia did (notably with respect to the Hungarian and Italian communities) from ex-Yugoslavia<sup>23</sup>. This also applies to minority print media<sup>24</sup>. Hungary chose to set up a new, innovative minority representation framework at the beginning of the 1990s, integrating some of the already existing minority media outlets into it. With the passage of the Minorities Act in 1993, 13 minority groups (see section 1.2 above) living in Hungary for a least one century were officially recognized and granted the right to establish self-governing bodies at the national and local level.<sup>25</sup> The goal of the Minorities Act is to protect and promote minority cultural autonomy, construed as a necessary pre-conditions for members of minorities to preserve their identity as well as to fully exercise their human and political rights. To achieve this goal, national and local self-governments may establish and operate minority media outlets (Minorities Act, Art. 27). The Act further identifies a duty for public service broadcasting to cater for minority programs.

The Office for National and Ethnic Minorities and the Hungarian Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities (hereafter, the Public Foundation) are financing minority (mostly

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<sup>22</sup> Kotnik (2002) indicates that a publication entitled *Sloga (Harmony)* is published by the Serbian minority; shel also mentions a Bosnian bulletin entitled *Izbjeglicko vreme (The Refugee Times)* published by Vox Union and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. These two publications have been mentioned or brought to the attention of the author of this paper by the interviewees.

<sup>23</sup> In former Yugoslavia, Hungarians and Italians counted among the 'protected nationalities (*narodnosti*)'. See Ramet (1992, 54-8) for a short but illustrative account of the extensive minority protection framework in place until the 1980s.

<sup>24</sup> Ramet (ibid.) also underlines the richness of the Yugoslav minority media scene in general. "Language policy in Yugoslavia was oriented to the protection of the homelands". However, only in Macedonia were the Roma given collective rights (Ramet 1992, 55). According to Galjus (1999), the first Roma radio was established in 1963 in Tetovo, Macedonia.

print) media and other cultural activities. The second agency came into existence in 1995 in accordance with the Minorities Act, which defines its role and functions.<sup>26</sup> The Office for National and Ethnic Minorities was established in 1990, when the previous Council of Nationalities of the Council of Ministers was abolished. The Office is defined as an autonomous organ of state administration, working under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice. Its president is appointed by the prime minister. The Office is preparing decisions, as well as coordinating and evaluating government tasks pertaining to minority issues. It also provides information and serves as a communication facilitator between the government, minority organizations (including minority self-governments), and the public in general.

*Table 2: Minority Print Media in Hungary*

<b>Publication</b>	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Publication Founder/Owner</b>
Ludove Noviny (1957)	Slovak	Slovak National Self-Government
Hrvatski Glasnik (1991)	Croatian	Association of Hungarian Croats
Foaia (1951) Cronica Izvorul “ “ Lumina “ “	Romanian	Cultural Association of Hungarian Romanians Romanian Minority National Self-Government
Srpske Narodne Novine	Serbian	Szerb Demokratikus Szovetseg
Neue Zeitung (1957)	German	Neue Zeitung Foundation
Porabje	Slovenian	Slovenian Association of Hungary
Orszagos Ruszin Hirlap Ruszinszkyj Zyvot (not funded in 2001)	Ruthenian	[? FRKO]
Polonia Wegierska Gloss Polski (supplement to Polonia Wegierska)	Polish	Polish Minority National Self-Government [? MBJKE ]
Amaro Drom Lungo Drom Phralipe (not funded in 2002) Kethano Drom Cigany Hirlap (not funded in 2002) Vilagunk Rom Som (not funded in 2002)	Roma	Amaro Drom Lungo Drom Independent Roma Association ‘Phralipe’  National Roma Minority self-government
Hromada (1996)	Ukrainian	Cultural Association of Hungarian Ukrainians

<sup>25</sup> See for example Sobotka (2001/2), Kovats (2001), Vermeersch (2000), Walsh (2000), Riba (1999) for descriptions and analyses of the minority self-government system.

<sup>26</sup> “A public foundation shall be established to help preserve the identity of minorities living in Hungary, foster and pass on their traditions, preserve and develop their mother tongues, preserve their intellectual and material monuments, and promote activities aimed at diminishing the cultural and political disadvantages which derive from the fact that they belong to minorities” (Minorities Act, art. 55). The director of the Public Foundation is appointed by the members of its board.

Kafeneio	Greek	Greek Minority National Self-Government
Haemus (not funded in 2002)	Bulgarian	Hungarian Association of Bulgarians
Balgarszki Vesztnik		Bulgarian Minority National Self-Government
Baratsag (1993)	Multiethnic	'Filantrop' Company
Szombat (funded only in 1996)	Jewish	

Note: This table is based on data provided by the Public Foundation. It compiles titles (of publications with a 'national' minority as opposed to a local reach) that are or have been supported by the Foundation since 1996. Some titles included here may have ceased to appear or have changed names; other publications may not be included, notably if they are not appearing in the records of the Public Foundation.

As Table 2 shows, Hungary's thirteen minorities have at least one publication supported by public funds. Those publications are written in minority language, bilingual or, in the case of the Roma minority, in Hungarian.<sup>27</sup> Some minority groups boast more than one active publication (notably the Romanian and Roma communities). A number of minority publications (those of the so-called 'historical' minorities) predate the minority self-government system and were integrated in the new framework after 1993. In some cases, this did not go without tensions; not all minority associations were keen on 'giving up' their outlet to the benefit of the new national self-governments. Other publications were established in recent years as the outlets of national minority self-governments.

Table 2 does not include the Roma Press Center, a press agency that alimnts mainstream media (as well as Roma) outlets with news about Roma social and political issues. While not a media in itself, the presence of the Roma Press Center since 1996 has contributed to increase the quantity and objectivity of news about Roma in Hungarian media and to a change of mentalities in newsrooms, according to journalist Bela Berkes.<sup>28</sup> The table does not include local minority press initiatives either. Print minority media in Hungary are largely a national rather than a local phenomenon, although Istvan Fretyan, head of the Romanian affairs department at the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities, says that local papers in mixed communities should provide content in minority languages in a proportion reflecting the minority's share of the local population. However, there are not legal provisions to this effect.<sup>29</sup> There are few such initiatives outside of the

<sup>27</sup> Roughly three-quarters of Roma do not speak Romani (Kovats 1999, 150); 20% of Hungary's Roma speak Romani, and another 7% speak an archaic form of Romanian (Kovats 1998, 125).

<sup>28</sup> The Roma Press Center employs six journalists and two editors on a permanent basis, all Roma. In addition, five 'international coordinators' work part-time. The Center forwards a daily news compilation to approximately 12 Hungarian dailies, radio and television stations, as well as Internet portals. The Center also offers training opportunities for Roma journalism students (one journalist is currently supported by the Center for Independent Journalism in Budapest).

<sup>29</sup> The 1993 Act simply states that local minority self-government may establish and run local print and electronic media outlets « within the limits of the resources at their disposal » (art. 27).



capital. For example, the local newspapers in Totkomlos and Bekescsaba include a few pages for the Slovak minority inhabiting these localities.<sup>30</sup> In Komarom, the town paper also includes a few pages targeting members of the Ukrainian minority. Occasionally, the Komarom local television produces programs about/for Ukrainians.<sup>31</sup> Jaroslava Hartyanyi, president of the Ukrainian national minority self-government, points out that local media leaders and minority self-government representatives in Komarom have developed a good relationship. This was not the case in the city of Szeged, where no local media caters to the need of the Hungarian Ukrainians (four Ukrainian local minority self-governments were elected in 1998; two in districts of the capital, one in Komarom and another in Szeged). “When it comes to the media, connections are the most important factor”, says Hartyanyi.

According to the Public Foundation director Marton Molnar, minority publications contribute to secure minority cultural autonomy in a dual manner: firstly as a symbol of an ethnic identity, and secondly as a means to maintain this distinct identity. Theoretically, this double role does not require the number of publications to be dependent on the size of the minority groups or on the number of readers. Ideally, the Public Foundation would support only one print ‘national’ initiative per minority. According to the interviewees, a higher number of publications reflects partly the sheer size of the minority (e.g. Roma) and partly the dividing line(s) running through the groups and how those divides are politicized. The term ‘politicization’ is usually attributed to the presence of political parties; however, some minority associations and NGOs have near-party characteristics and functions. The Roma minority exhibits the highest degree of politicization among minority groups in Hungary, its various organizations operating as quasi-political parties.<sup>32</sup> Divisions are milder but nonetheless present among some other minority groups. The first Romanian publication, *Foaia* (a weekly, in Romanian), was established by a Romanian minority association in the 1950s. Nowadays, this association advocates a different conception of minority identity and promotes different demands and positions vis-à-vis the state than that of the national Romanian minority self-government.<sup>33</sup> An attempt by the Public Foundation to merge the newsrooms of two Romanian publications (*Foia* and *Cronica*) failed. Marton Molnar, president of the Foundation, reckons that differences and conflicts constitute normal and expected phenomena in

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with Imre Fuhl, Budapest, 16 September 2002.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Jaroslava Hartyanyi, Budapest, 19 September 2002.

<sup>32</sup> Major Roma associations are associated with national political parties (interview with Bela Osztójkan, 27 September 2002. See Kovats (2001) for an interesting account of how plurality and competitiveness came to characterize Roma politics.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Istvan Fretyan, Budapest, 6 September 2002.



minority communities – just as in any other communities. In the case of the Romanian minority, those differences proved too large to ignore when it came to funding media outlets. However, the director admits that the Foundation lacks the resources to support all groups and conceptions present in all the communities.

How then one publication is selected for financial support by the Public Foundation? The Public Foundation does not distinguish between owners or editorial policies, says Istvan Fretyan, of the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities. Local initiatives in minority languages have priority, and objectivity is not for the Foundation or for the Office to implement or monitor. The law states that minorities are entitled to their own media but does not specify how resources are to be allocated between the different contenders. “We have to decide who are the ones who represent minorities. This is not easy. In the system of self-government, the self-governments are the representatives [of minorities] and negotiating partners of the state”, declares Fretyan.

Clearly, the Hungarian self-government system provided clear incentives for minorities to set up not only national self-government bodies but also media outlets. It is not surprising to find that smaller, more recently recognized minority groups’ media were established following the elections of self-governments. Those groups could take advantage of the organizational structure and funds provided by the new system. In the field of minority media, the self-government system has thus permitted to operationalize the minority rights legislative scheme (especially linguistic rights) to a greater extent than in others areas of public life (such as public administration and the judiciary, where speakers of minority languages are likely not to be well received if they require service in their language (Council of Europe 2001, 7)).

### **3.3 Broadcast minority media in Slovenia**

In both countries, public service television and radio networks play a crucial role in financing and providing a ‘window’ for minority programs. In Slovenia, the electronic minority media scene reflects the different degree of recognition and institutionalization of minority rights.

Television Koper/Capodistria, a regional studio part of the Slovenian public service broadcasting network, has been producing programs in Italian for 31 years. The Italian radio (set up in 1949) and television are significantly larger than their Hungarian counterparts, both in terms of programs length and work force. While the former employ almost 50 people each, the Hungarian radio station counts 14 permanent employees and the Hungarian television program, nine. The Hungarian studio in Lendava is part of the Maribor regional RTV SLO studio. The difference

between the two minorities' media is rooted in degree of assimilation as well as the 'status' of the language<sup>34</sup> rather than in the size of the minority groups (there are more than twice as many Hungarians than Italians in Slovenia). Lajos Bence, editor-in-chief of *Nepujsag*, speaks about the Slovenian Hungarians as a community slowly coming back from "near the point of no return" in terms of assimilation.<sup>35</sup>

Minority self-governing communities in Slovenia<sup>36</sup> nominate five of the seven members of the boards designing and supervising minority programs on public television and radio (there are two separate boards for Italian and Hungarian programs) (RTV SLO statutes, art. 52-4). The two other members of each board are appointed by the board of RTV Slovenia. The ethnic minority programs boards then submit names of candidates for the posts of directors of minority channels and stations; they also endorse the appointment of minority programs editors (Komac 1999, 55).

Roma programs are still a rare occurrence in Slovenia; most strikingly, the minority group is completely absent from Slovenia's radio and television public service network.<sup>37</sup> However, there have been radio programs for and about Roma aired since the 1970s says Marjan Dora, editor-in-chief of Murski Val Radio and of its Roma program. Since 1991, the Roma programs aired irregularly by the station turned into a regular, specific show.<sup>38</sup>

*Table 3: Broadcast media in Slovenia*

Minority	Television	Radio
Italian	Television Koper/Capodistria, 9 hours/day (Italian program)	Radio Capodistria, 24 hours/day (Italian program)
Hungarian	Lendava studio program 30 minutes/4 times per week (since 1 October 2002)	Radio MMR (Muravideki Magyar Radio), 13 hour and 15 minutes /day
Roma	'TV As', 1 hour, 5 times/year	'Romskih 60', on Radio

<sup>34</sup> Italian is an international language that provides more communication opportunities than Hungarian. Furthermore, the range of radio and television stations in Italian along the border offers a large and dynamic choice to listeners and viewers.

<sup>35</sup> Komac (1999, 26-37) mentions that in addition to assimilation resulting from migration out of the Hungarian area, the age structure and low birth rate of Hungarians are responsible for their declining number.

<sup>36</sup> Municipal minority self-government councils (elected in four localities in Prekmurje and three in Istria) establish 'national' self-government communities (one for the Hungarians and one for the Italians) and elect its council from their members (Komac 2000, 368). One additional aspect of minority representation in Slovenia (for the Italian/Hungarian communities) resides in the presence of at least one (according to art. 39 of the 1993 Law on Local Government) or more (as determined by municipalities' statutes) minority representative(s) on the municipal council. These minority councilors are elected by inhabitants officially registered as members of minority group in the locality.

<sup>37</sup> The statutes of RTV Slovenia specify that the public service network has to produce and broadcast radio and television programs for the Hungarian and Italian minorities (and no other minority groups), having in view to contribute to the realization of the two minorities' constitutional rights, strengthen the links between those communities and their mother countries and include their "cultural and other achievements" into national programs (Art. 7).

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Marjan Dora, Murska Sobota, 3 October 2002.

	(the program is also carried by a number of cable TV stations throughout the country)	Murski Val, 1 hour/week (Murska Sobota)  'Studio D' (Novo Mesto), weekly
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*Source: data from 2001 RTV Slovenia Annual Report, interviews and Kotnik (2002)*

### 3.4 Broadcast minority media in Hungary

Hungarian Radio's regional studio in Pecs started to air programs in Serbo-Croatian in the 1950s. Shows in Slovak (1974) and Romanian languages (1980) were aired from Szeged, where is located Hungarian Radio's second regional studio. The first program in Slovenian was aired in 1979 (Hungarian Radio 1999). The first television program for Roma started in 1992; it is the only minority television program still produced in the capital. The first public television show targeting minorities appeared in 1978, also in Serbo-Croatian.<sup>39</sup>

Minority media programs are aired along with 'regular' programs (i.e. in Hungarian and targeting the general population) on state channels and stations. Their time slots (typically early afternoon) minimize their visibility. The Hungarian public broadcaster has been criticized for the 'ghettoization' of minority programs, as "neither minority interests nor minority actors are presented anywhere within the State-owned public-service media beyond the fulfillment of public-service quotas". As a consequence, only a few people are aware of minority programs (OSI Report on Minority Protection in Hungary 2002, 290).

The two public foundations set up to provide public service broadcasting and manage its finances (as well as isolate it from political pressures) are supervised by 21-member boards on which self-governments, or in their absence, the national associations of recognized national and ethnic minorities, delegate one member (Media Act, art. 56).

It is important to note that list presented in Table 4 includes only minority programs aired nation- and region-wide by state radio and television. A number of local stations produce programs in minority language or for/about minorities, regularly or occasionally.<sup>40</sup> The frequency allocation process provides incentives for local and regional licenses applicants to include minority programs in their broadcasting plan. However, while a number do so, not many stations and channels that go

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Peter Leipold, Budapest, 26 September 2002.

<sup>40</sup> The list of the Public Foundation grantees is one of the main sources. In addition, the European Roma Right Center compiled a non-exhaustive database of Roma media which includes the program 'Romani Glinda' on Kalocsa local television (see <http://errc.org/databases/media.shtml>), which does not appear in the Public Foundation list. Please see the Appendix for more on local electronic media endeavours.

through with their promises, and lack of compliance does not lead to sanctions (OSI Report on Minority protection in Hungary 2002, 289-290). Due to this state of affairs, information about electronic local minority programs in Hungary is scattered and can prove hard to verify.

A major Roma local media outlet outside of the state broadcasting network is Radio ©<sup>41</sup>, a Budapest-based radio that calls itself ‘Budapest’s first Roma radio.’ It airs shows addressing Roma issues (for example, one weekly program tackles social issues such as housing, most particularly in the 7<sup>th</sup> district, where a large number of Roma live; another is a call-in program where a lawyer provides free legal advice) and Roma music. The station was established in 2001<sup>42</sup> and holds a license that requires it to air public service, non-commercial shows during half of its air time. Seventy per cent of employees are Roma. It airs four hours per week in Romani; the editor-in-chief hopes to extend these programs to ten hours. At the time of the interview, the radio was still struggling to stabilize its financial basis.<sup>43</sup>

*Table 2: Minority programs in Hungary*

<b>Minority</b>	<b>Television</b>	<b>Radio</b>
Armenian	‘Rondo’ (a shared program for six minority groups: Armenian, Bulgarian, Polish, Greek, Ruthenian and Ukrainian 52 minutes/twice montly (26 minutes repeated)	30 minutes/week country-wide
Bulgarian	‘Rondo’	30 minutes/week country-wide
Roma	26 minutes/week (repeated) and 4 times/year 52 minutes for program ‘Cigany Forum’	30 minutes/6 times week, country-wide
Greek	‘Rondo’	30 minutes/week, country- wide
Croatian	26 minutes/week (repeat)	90 minutes/day, regional 30 minutes/day, country-wide
Polish	‘Rondo’	30 minutes/week country-wide
German	26 minutes/week (repeated)	90 minutes/day, regional 30 minutes/day, country-wide

<sup>41</sup> The station maintains a web page at [www.radioc.hu](http://www.radioc.hu).

<sup>42</sup> Radio © was founded by two individuals, a number of members of the Autonomy Foundation and of a state foundation for Roma.

<sup>43</sup> Currently, donors, both domestic and international, support over 75% of its expenses. Advertisement represents 25% of revenues; the aim of the owners is to increase the share of the latter to 50% in three years time (interview with Gyorgy Kerenyi, editor-in-chief of Radio ©, Budapest, 11 October 2002).

Romanian	26 minutes/week (repeated)	90 minutes/day, regional 30 minutes/day, country-wide
Ruthenian	'Rondo'	30 minutes/week country-wide
Serbian	26 minutes/week (repeated)	30 minutes/day + 50 minutes/4 times week, regional 30 minutes day, country-wide
Slovak	26 minutes/week (repeated)	120 minutes/day, regional 30 minutes/day, country-wide
Slovenian	26 minutes/twice monthly (repeated)	30 minutes/week, regional 30 minutes/week, country- wide
Ukrainian	'Rondo'	30 minutes/week country-wide
Multiethnic (show about minorities intended for majority viewers)	'Egyutt' ('Together') 52 minutes/twice monthly (26 minutes repeated)	'Egy hazaban' [In One Homeland], 30 minutes/week (one week every month, the program lasts 180 minutes)

*Source: Minorities in Hungary 2000-2001 published by the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities (data for 2000).*

Support of minority media programs within the public service framework rests entirely with public television and radio finances. The Public Foundation is not however completely absent from the broadcasting field. It gives small grants to local self-governments, minority associations or local stations airing programs for minorities, including Radio © in Budapest.<sup>44</sup> The actual financial situation of Hungarian Public Radio and Television is critical, with the radio in a somewhat better position than the television. At the end of 2000, the government covered Hungarian Television's debt of 70 million USD. During the same year, the audience share of the first public television channel was estimated at 12% during prime time hours (Bajomi-Lazar 2002). In 2001, the government intervened again to extract MTV from another financial crisis. Finally, the television's previous management is under investigation following allegations of corruption.

Given these conditions, it is not surprising to hear that demands to modify minority shows or the time at which they are aired are met with negative responses from the upper echelons of the institutions. Peter Leipold, editor-in-chief of the minority and regional programs and programs for Hungarian minorities abroad, says that were the public television in a better financial situation, it

<sup>44</sup> The Public Foundation granted nearly 10 million forints (approximately 38,000 USD) in 2002 to local electronic media initiatives (see <http://web.axelero.hu/mnekk/frame/klts02.htm>). For 2002, the Foundation supported one local radio/television initiatives for the Bulgarian (1), Croatian (5), German (10), Armenian (2), Romanian (3), Ruthenian (1), Slovak (10), Slovenian (1) communities. In addition, four 'interethnic' shows were funded (<http://web.axelero.hu/mnekk/frame/celtam01.xls>).

would support more minority programs. However, with respect to the time that they are broadcast at, only small changes - “half an hour later or earlier” – are conceivable.<sup>45</sup> Budgets are hardly respected, says Leipold, and consequently regional studios experience difficulties with planning.

The result of these combined factors is that “minority program are repetitive and boring for the audience”, according to Jaroslava Hartyanyi, president of the Ukrainian national minority self-government and editor-in-chief of the Ukrainian minority publication. Agreeing that programs have changed little since they were launched, Leipold contends that their aim is to preserve culture – hence the emphasis on dancing, singing, etc. He also reminds that knowledge of minority languages is not the same for each minority group. He would nonetheless like to see the current minority programs achieving greater autonomy.

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Peter Leipold, Budapest, 26 September 2002.

## 4. Resources and Content

This part of the paper attempts to systematize information pertaining to the process of funding minority media, from application procedures to monitoring of the output. Actors on the state side, mainly government agencies, play a key role in setting the selection criteria and in monitoring the ‘products’ (the case of public service broadcasting is particular since funding does not function on the basis of tenders.) Then, the focus shifts to the second group of actors, namely minority media, how they make use of resources - both financial and human - and what kind of content emerges as a result.

### **4.1 The funding process: application, selection and monitoring**

#### *4.1.1 Slovenia*

The goals of the Ministry of Culture’s funding of minority cultural activities policy are to “take into account the existence of different cultures”, to stimulate and integrate “the cultural creativity of the two national communities (Italian and Hungarian), the Gypsy community, other minority ethnic communities and immigrants [...] into the common cultural area of the Republic of Slovenia...”.<sup>46</sup> The Ministry’s policy further seeks to foster “possibilities for informing” minorities and majority about issues of equality and tolerance, to promote respect, cooperation, and dialogue between communities. Finally, it encourages the “better linguistic competence” of minority groups.<sup>47</sup> In accordance with the differentiated status of minority groups, two sets of priorities guide the grant process. The first set targets the Italian and Hungarian communities and emphasizes the preservation and development of ethnic identity, as well as contacts with mother countries. The second set prioritize mainly the funding of cultural activities (shows; debates; round tables; etc.), and initiatives encouraging harmonious coexistence between different cultures.

The Italian Community of the Littoral, the Hungarian Ethnic Community of Pomurska and the Federation of Gypsy Communities of Slovenia can submit applications for the Department of Minority Cultural Activities’ programs. The two first associations are recognized as the official representatives of the Italian and Hungarian communities by the government regulations. The Union

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<sup>46</sup> According to Suzana Curin, the Department for Minority Cultural Activities is the only government body using a broader approach to minority group rights as to include ‘new minorities’. The Ministry set up programs addressing the needs of new minorities in 1992, and Roma programs were launched one year later.

<sup>47</sup> See document entitled ‘Standards and Criteria for Funding, Cofinancing or Subsidising Cultural Programmes and Projects in 2001 From the Part of the National Budget Earmarked for Culture’, Ministry of Culture.

of Roma of Slovenia acts as the equivalent for that minority group. In addition, fourteen new minority associations or organizations are listed in documents provided by the Department.

Application material can be found both online and at the Department's; tenders occur once a year. Applicants are encouraged to meet the Department personnel (three employees) to obtain advice on how to fill the forms. Funds are available under two broad programs: the social protection and the integration programs. The difference between the two in the criteria that projects have to meet to obtain funds; in the integration program, where the sums available are larger, minority applicants compete on equal footing with other cultural activities and projects submitted for funding by any other individuals or organizations in the country. On the other hand, the social protection program is tailored to the needs of groups at a disadvantage due to their minority status in order to help them realize their activities.<sup>48</sup> In 2002, approximately 153 million tolar (approximately 650,000 USD) were granted to support minority cultural activities, a sum that represents 0.5% of the Ministry of Culture's budget. The head of the Department reports that this figure has been stable during the last few years.

The sums granted are given to successful applicants only upon presentation of receipts once the project is completed (or at least until one part of the project output can be produced, such as the first issue of a magazine). According to the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and Head of the Department for Minority Activities Suzanna Curin, approximately 90% of submitted proposals are supported; and roughly 70% of the sums requested are granted. The nature of the project as well as the degree of organization displayed by the applying minority group are taken into consideration when awarding grants. Curin admits that the Roma community obtains proportionally less than other groups due to their low level of organization in the field of cultural activities. Furthermore, projects involving collaboration between new minority groups enjoy funding priority. Eventual support from mother countries is not considered by the Department. Finally, all 'products' resulting from grants have to be sent to the Department (videotapes in the case of festivals, presentations, plays, etc.); at the end of the year, all grantees must produce a report accounting for their activities.

Contacts between the Department and minority organizations' representatives are frequent – almost daily, reports Curin. The department holds two formal meetings every year with the representatives of the Italian and Hungarian minorities, and three with representatives of 'new

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48 Author's interview with Suzana Curin, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and Head of the Department for Minority Activities.



minorities' and Romani communities. Before a new tender is launched, the department seeks feedback by asking minority organizations to evaluate its programs and work.

The Office for Nationalities, “the central institution for guaranteeing and respecting minority rights” in Slovenia<sup>49</sup>, is the other governmental body that supports minority media activities. There is little contact or coordination between the Office for Nationalities and the Department for Minority Activities of the Ministry of Culture. However, according to Curin, the different spheres of competence of the two bodies it unlikely that the same project be funded by both. Also entrusted with the supervision of the implementation of minority protection provisions in the various Slovenian ministries, the Office has the duty to providing “information relevant to the needs of the national communities and the Romany people, which is why the resources for co-financing of the nationalities' newspapers and other publications, radio and television programmes for the Italian and Hungarian national community, and radio programmes for the Romany are guaranteed via the Office.”<sup>50</sup>

The Office reimburses to RTV Slovenia parts of the sums it spends on producing and airing minority programs. The share of minority programs supported by the Office is agreed upon in advance during negotiations with the public broadcaster. The Office for Nationalities also supports Italian and Hungarian minority activities in eight municipalities (notably, *Nepujsag* received 51.3 million tolar in 2002 – more than 210,000 USD) from the Office for Nationalities (Kotnik 2002)). Here as well negotiations lie at the core of the funding process; typically, representatives of the Office visit the municipality, discuss with local representatives to convince them to spend resources on minority projects. Those expenses are subsequently reimbursed to the municipalities. Stane Baluh, deputy director of the Office for Nationalities, reported that discussions were underway to include Roma municipalities in the funding scheme and expressed the hope to see the current law on financing of local municipalities modified accordingly. He believes that the recent court decision allowing for the election of Roma representatives in 20 municipalities constitutes a step in the right direction (see footnote no. 9).

In addition, the Office for Nationalities supports local/regional four Roma radio and television programs via direct grants to stations. This has been the case for a few years already and in 2001, the sums allocated to these initiatives have significantly increased, says Baluh. Kotnik

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<sup>49</sup> From *Minorities: An Enriched Expression of the Cultural Heritage*, communique issued by the Government Public Relations and Media Office of Slovenia, 4 February 2002 (<http://www.uvi.si/eng/new/background-information/minorities-cultural-heritage>).

<sup>50</sup> See <http://www.gov.si/vrs/ang/ang-text/ministries/office-for-nationalities.html>

(2002) reports that the Office for Nationalities disbursed 7.2 million tolars in 2002 (approximately 30,000 USD) to support Roma radio and television programs, and that an additional 600,000 tolars (2,500 USD) was granted for the development of new television programs.<sup>51</sup> Baluh explains that there are no formal application forms or guidelines; minority associations or representatives propose a project and successful applicants must submit a final report and prove that the activities have been carried out. Unlike the Department, the Office can make part of the funds available before receipts can be produced, thus making the system “very flexible. We adjust, we talk, we suggest things,” says the Office’s deputy director.

#### *4.1.2 Hungary*

In Hungary, the call for applications is publicized online as well as in minority media outlets. Word of mouth also plays an important role in attracting new candidates, especially in the Roma community, explains the director of the Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities Marton Molnar. Only registered organizations can submit proposals. Projects must aim at preserving minority identity, and goals be commensurable with the proposed budget. Between 40 and 50% of applications receive funding (the Public Foundation receives approximately 5,000 proposal every year). Granted support is typically less than the amount requested. In recent years, a lower number of project proposals have received less financial support than before. According to Molnar, this is due to a decrease in the budget of the Public Foundation in real terms (in 1995, it amounted to 400 million forints, and in 2002, 620 millions (2,400,000 USD), an increase insufficient to cover inflation during the same period).

The case of national minority publications (listed in Table 2) is slightly different. They are granted on average 70% of the proposed budget that they submit to the Public Foundation. Furthermore, the Foundation has a small reserve that it uses to come to the rescue of minority national outlets when they are faced with unexpected difficulties, such as the loss of a donor.

The Public Foundation is supervised by a 24-member board, who decide which projects are funded. As specified in the 1993 Minority Act, 13 board members are delegated by minority communities. The remaining members represent a number of ministries and public institutions (the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Culture, Education, as well as of Children and Youth; the Hungarian Academy of Science; the factions in parliament delegate one member each; the president

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<sup>51</sup> Kotnik mentions only three programs, while in interview Baluh says there are four. The only concrete and detailed financial data available to the author is that provided in Kotnik.

of the Office of National and Ethnic Minority is also a member of the board). As director of the Public Foundation, Molnar can make recommendations to the board but is not party to the decisions pertaining to grants allocation. For each category of projects, there is a different committee composed of 8 to 10 board members. They review applications and make recommendations on the basis of which the whole board takes a decision.

As in Slovenia, minority grantees in Hungary have to forward the results of their activities to the Public Foundation. The Foundation devotes 7% of its resources to monitoring. The activities supported by the cultural program of the Public Foundation generate over 1,700 ‘products’ each year, from theater plays to exhibitions and library openings to publications of various kinds, minority papers and magazines included. According to its director, approximately half of the events and products supported are examined. Monitoring involves ensuring that funds were spent for in the manner approved by the Foundation. The Public Foundation can take to court applicants who do not comply. Molnar estimates the number of such cases at 5% of all the projects supported. The very large majority of these agreement breaches (of which 90% concern Roma minority projects) are cases of fraud; rather, a small number of grantees use the funds to carry out other activities that benefit the community, albeit not in the way specified by the contract. (Molnar cites the example of a grantee who purchased Christmas candy for the community’s children instead of using the funds provided by Foundation to buy children books for the local library.) Respect of contract terms is something that some grantees learn going through the funding process, explains Molnar. Suzanne Curin of the Slovenian Department of Minority Cultural Activities also stresses the positive effect of the grant process on the development of minority organizations’ capacities and skills.

#### **4.2 Financial and human resources**

In Slovenia, Hungarian and Italian media outlets offer a mix of public affairs, culture, sports, etc. The Roma and Bosnian publications emphasize cultural content. Most minority publications and programs in Hungary revolve around social and cultural issues: community events and celebrations, recipes, traditional customs, songs and dances, etc. Minority political life (for example, minority self-government elections, decisions, etc.) are also featured, but to a different extent depending on the group. This section present what minority media leaders make of the resources at their disposal (state support as well as human resources available within minority communities), and how it impacts on minority media organization and content.

#### 4.2.1 Slovenia

To the question “Does your outlet have enough resources?”, minority media journalists, editors or program directors typically answer “No”. This is hardly a surprising finding. However, the degree of dissatisfaction varies across minorities and media types. In Slovenia, the directors of Italian radio and television programs have access to considerable resources (comparisons are expressed in relative terms as opposed to a given, external standard). A good illustration of this state of affairs is perhaps that they report only rare instances of news/technical crew members sharing.<sup>52</sup> In contrast, the Hungarian radio and television studios in Lendava frequently engage in such collaboration. Another factor that has to be considered in the Hungarian minority case is the scarcity of human resources. It is one of the reasons why the Hungarian television program has not yet achieved the 30-minutes daily production minimal requirement. Potential journalists are difficult to recruit. Furthermore, long working hours and relatively low pay deter prospective young journalists, believes the Hungarian programs director Albert Halasz. The Hungarian studios are constantly trying to identify candidates. They give scholarships to young Slovene Hungarians to study in Hungary (two scholarships were granted in 2002), and provide them with in-studio technical training during the summer months.

This is not to say that media professionals are not satisfied with the content of their outlets. The Hungarian television studio in Lendava is far behind the rest of RTV Slovenia in terms of equipment, at least until will be able to move to new premises equipped with digital technologies at the end of 2003. In spite of these material constraints, the editor-in-chief of the Hungarian program ‘Hidak’ (‘Bridges’) Helena Zver is happy with the show. She underlines that ‘Hidak’ went from a 30-minute weekly program four years ago to being broadcast four times a week.

Roma in Slovenia face the ‘parallel or integrated minority media’ dilemma with more acuity than other minority groups. Jozek Horvat-Muc complains about the lack of support for salaries for those who put together the magazine *Romano Them*. On the other hand, he and another journalist are remunerated for their contribution to Radio Murski Val’s Roma program. In the light of his experience, ‘purely’ Roma initiatives simply do not pay off when compared to integration into a mainstream, majority media structure. Horvat-Muc is ambivalent toward the idea of establishing a Roma radio station in Slovenia similar to Radio © in Hungary. He is not convinced that a Roma radio station would dispose of the necessary human resources and skills to ‘fill’ its air time as

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<sup>52</sup> Interview with Robert Appolonio, editor-in-chief of television programs for the Italian minority and its counterpart for the radio Bruno Fonda

required by a license agreement. The observable ‘one-man band’ phenomenon (Horvat-Muc is involved in nearly, if not all, Roma media initiatives and projects in Slovenia) applying to Roma community constitutes another indicator of the underlying cohesion and socio-economic problems faced by the minority.

The lack of official minority status has a direct impact on resources available to new minorities’ media endeavours. Furthermore, what communities make of existing resources seem to be a matter of community assertiveness.<sup>53</sup> In the case of Serbs, the reluctance “to expose ourselves, [ ] to declare that we are organized because [...] it could have consequences for the people involved” expressed by Vesna Miletic, the president of the association ‘Serbian Community’, may well be tempering the readiness of minority members to contribute to media initiatives that could increase the community’s visibility.

#### *4.2.2 Hungary*

In terms of resources, Hungarian minority media are harder pressed than in Slovenia. The contrast is greatest when putting the available financial information pertaining to minority programs supported by the public broadcasters side by side. The severe financial difficulties experienced by public television significantly limits the possibilities of what, where and how minority events are covered.<sup>54</sup> The budget of the Serbian 30-minutes program averages at 180,000 forints (approximately 750 Euros), excluding the salaries of its two full-time contributors.<sup>55</sup> The journalists rely on the regional studio’s cameramen and other technical operators, whom are remunerated out of the program’s budget. Minority programs journalists are almost irreplaceable. Because it is not very well paid, people choose other jobs, says Istvan Popovics, editor-in-chief of the Serbian minority program since 1992 and a former teacher. The main criterion for prospective candidates is the knowledge of the minority language. Like Popovics, people working for minority programs often have a background in languages or teaching.

On the print media front, editors shared the opinion that the resources allotted to their publication are barely sufficient to maintain the outlets afloat. Some editors also question the fairness of a system that allocates similar amounts to minority communities in spite of large

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<sup>53</sup> This is similar to the ‘leadership and organization’ variables identified by Cormack (1998, 40) as one of the conditions for the emergence of minority language media: “Often grassroots pressure does not really begin to develop properly until *after* [original emphasis] activists have organized a campaign...”.

<sup>54</sup> For example, Jaroslava Hartyanyi tells that the Ukrainian minority self-government must sometimes pay from its own budget the rent of a camera for a day to cover an event featured in the program ‘Rondo’.

differences in terms of size, geographical concentration/dispersion (which impacts on distribution costs) and the availability of support from a richer mother country (as in the case of Germans).

Minority papers in Hungary are supported by the Public Foundation, as well as by national minority self-governments. This applies to *Ludove Noviny*, the publication of the Slovak national minority government. It employs eight people, five on a permanent basis and three occasional collaborators. Printing represents nearly 50% of the paper's expenses; salaries amount to 30 to 40%, while 5 to 10% is devoted to equipment and other maintenance costs. Alternatively, the German publication is not supported by the national German minority self-government. However, should the paper find itself in a difficult financial situation, the self-government would help out, says its president Otto Heinek. Instead of running the paper, the national self-government edits a small bilingual supplement in which it reports about the decisions taken by the self-government and other minority public affair issues. The supplement is then inserted in the paper.

#### **4.3 Minority media independence**

The nature and goals of minority media makes it hard to evaluate their content according to criteria regularly applied to mainstream media, such as 'informativity' and objectivity. What is informative in one minority's context may be trivial or obvious in another; what appears as a lack of timeliness for a reader from the majority may constitute an important source of knowledge about minority history and identity according to a minority media consumer.

As with any media, who owns or controls the minority outlet can have an influence on content. The usual hypothesis links ownership and content's objectivity/independence. Capture is a well-known phenomenon pertaining (but certainly not exclusively) to minority media; namely, capture can occur when a clique of individuals perpetuates itself at the command of an outlet, resulting in media content that is "hardly likely to reflect and represent the heterogeneity that exists within [...] ethnic communities" (Husband 1994, 15). Typically, minority media supervisory arrangements are meant to ensure minority control over the outlets rather than media independence from other, representative/political minority bodies. This rule of thumb largely applies to the Slovenian and Hungarian contexts. In the latter, the national minority publication owner, usually the national self-government, appoints the editor-in-chief. Hungarian radio and television minority programs are more insulated as there are little links between programs makers and self-

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<sup>55</sup> Information provided by Istvan Popovics. The Hungarian Television's annual report or other official data we not available.

governments, whether at the local or national level. The role of minority politicians and minority media professionals are not infrequently cumulated by one person. Both in Hungary and Slovenia, editors of a minority newspapers or program are also members or leaders of minority self-governing bodies. Whether this overlap has significant bearing on media content with regards to the capture phenomenon is controversial. Albert Halasz and Helena Zver are respectively Hungarian program director and editor-in-chief of the Hungarian television program « Bridges » in Lendava. Halasz believes that his position as a local minority councilor helped him to secure support for Hungarian media outlets.<sup>56</sup> Conversely, Zver believes that cumulating the two roles only makes media professionals vulnerable to suspicions and accusations of conflict of interests. Zver notes that political pressure is not relevant for 'Hidak' because the fact that the show is aired on a national channel put it beyond the local politicians' sphere of interests and influence. She believes that such pressure is more likely to be applied on local or regional outlets such as the Hungarian radio program. Jozsef Vegi, editor-in-chief of the Hungarian radio program, confirms that politics 'penetrates' minority media; however, it tends to do so because of personal rather than party or ideological conflicts between minority association members and councilors. He asserts that the sometimes fuzzy line between media and politics does not prevent the outlet from being critical towards local and regional minority associations and leadership.

There are practical obstacles to ensuring that a plurality of opinions are expressed in minority outlets and that they are not 'captured' or biased in favor of the currently elected representatives who often control them. Enforcing impartiality is not the task of the Hungarian Office for National and Ethnic Minorities, says Istvan Fretyan, who is heading the Romanian affairs department of the Office. However, in the case of intra-minority conflicts, the Office finds itself in the position of having "to decide who are the ones who represent minorities. This is not easy. According to the current system, self-governments are the representatives and negotiating partners of the state". Media can also be at the center of local power struggles. Fretyan cites the case of a small locality inhabited by Hungarian Romanians where the Public Foundation supports the 'opposition' local minority paper, "not because it is the paper of the opposition but because it is written in minority language and is a local initiative. The Foundation does not distinguish between

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<sup>56</sup> Halasz quoted the result of an opinion issued by the Board of RTV Slovenia in the wake of allegations of conflict of interests directed at him as well as the editor-in-chief of the Hungarian radio program. According to this opinion, the position of representative of a minority community is not considered to be political one and can therefore be cumulated with directorship and editorship of minority programs.



owners or editorial policy. It would have funded a local media paper written in Romanian loyal to the mayor had he established one”, affirms Fretyan.

Thus in practice, the Office and the Public Foundation ‘navigate’ between organizations vying for media resources both within and between minority groups. The decision making process of the Public Foundation’s board involves arguments and compromises, says its director Marton Molnar. Because it leaves no role for an ‘opposition’ and involve little accountability on the part of national self-governments, the Hungarian minority self-government system is conducive to the mingling of media and politics; this is already visible notably in the Roma community (the Roma national self-government launched its paper *Cigany Hirlap* in 1996 but support from the Foundation was discontinued the next year as the money was not accounted for (Kovats 2001, 12)).

Yet, editors and journalists also have incentives to be impartial, notably in their coverage of minority elections campaign would it only be because “they do not know who will win”, says Imre Fulh, the editor of the Slovak weekly *Ludove Noviny*. Thus election years are not associate with turnover in the paper’s staff. However, Istvan Fretyan is convinced that outlets supportive of current self-governments’ views are more likely to benefit from a more reliable financial basis than critical outlets. Bela Osztojkan, editor-in-chief if the Roma magazine *Vilagunk (Our World)*, explains that Roma politics tends to mirror Hungarian politics; thus a caricature of former prime minister Viktor Orban in the magazine *Phralipe* led to the termination of the publication by the then national Roma self-government, aligned with the prime minister’s party. Elected as a Roma minority representative under the banner of the association Phralipe, Osztojkan says he is unlikely to continue editing *Vilagunk* if he is not reelected. A change of Roma minority self-government typically brings a change of editor. As a consequence, Osztojkan considers himself as a media and a political figure.

Otto Heinek, the current president of the German national minority self-government who worked for the German minority paper during the 1980s, asserts that minority media outlets do not constitute minority candidates’ preferred fora to wage an electoral battle. Germans read Hungarian mainstream media and a candidate seeking support will naturally turn to them. Heinek provides the example of the German self-government, which purchased advertising space in Hungarian mainstream publications to persuade members of the German minority to register as such during the last census.) Furthermore, minority candidates running for county council seats generally cannot obtain the necessary 4% of votes cast without appealing to other minorities as well as non-minority voters - which they can do only via Hungarian media.



## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1 Actors and resources

This paper investigated a number of questions: what minority media exist in Slovenia and Hungary and who are the main actors? What resources are available to them? What insights can we gain about the relationship between the support structure of minority media (regulations; funding process; etc.) and their content?

The first part of the paper depicted the general situation of minorities in Slovenia and Hungary. It highlighted the differentiated legal status of the Italian and Hungarian communities on the one hand, and of the ‘new minorities’ constituted by people from former Yugoslav republics on the other, with the Roma community somewhere in between in terms of collective rights and their implementation. It also pointed out to the particular situation of the Roma minority in Hungary. Much larger than the other twelve minority groups in the country, it is faced with significant socio-economic difficulties and discrimination, rather than with the threat of assimilation confronted by other minorities.

The second part of the paper laid out a list of print and electronic minority media in Slovenia and Hungary. It also presented the main actors involved in state bodies supporting minority outlets. It emerges that public service (i.e. state) broadcasting networks play a pivotal role in providing the means to produce and disseminate minority media programs. It also clearly appears that this is done differently in both countries: in Slovenia, the tendency is to provide minorities (Hungarians and Italians) with separate outlets. In Hungary, minority programs (with subtitles in the case of television programs) are included in the general programming offered by state stations and channels.

Findings also indicate that the local minority media offering is rather limited in Hungary in general and with respect to the Roma community in Slovenia. This appears to be due to a number of factors: the degree of assimilation, the lack of mobilization, most notably in the case of Roma and, in both countries, a system that largely leaves the support of minority media initiatives - a page in minority language in the local newspaper for example - to the local authorities’ good will.

Completing the portrait already sketched, the third part shows that the support structure of minority media is generally more developed in Slovenia. Most obviously, it devotes more public funds to minority media than its neighbor. However, the distribution of funds is highly unequal among its minorities. Italians and Hungarians have access to resources (air time as well as funds)

through the three state bodies (RTV Slovenia included) active in the domain minority media. Roma have access to two bodies' resources. The Department for Minority Cultural Activities caters, albeit in a limited manner, to the needs of the 'new minorities' groups.

In Hungary, one state agency mainly supports print minority media, as well as a number of local electronic initiatives. A larger number of minority groups have to share a smaller pool of resources; on the other hand, access to these resources is more leveled than in Slovenia (i.e. groups receive relatively similar support). The system offers less predictability for minority media leaders as it is more largely based on *ad hoc* decisions taken by board members. The political framework in which the funding mechanisms of many minority media are embedded increases this instability. Unlike its Slovenian counterpart, the Hungarian public broadcaster is completely separated from the rest of the minority media funding structure. The financial and political crises that have dogged the Hungarian public television in the recent years resulted in extremely rigid constraints for minority programs; this reflects upon the programs' organization and content, which nobody – nor minorities nor majority – is satisfied with. In comparison, electronic minority media in Slovenia, mostly separate outlets under the control of minorities themselves and characterized by a wide range of topics covered and complete autonomy over content, exhibit much more dynamism and attract greater audience.

The third part of the paper also tackled the issue of minority media impartiality and the impact of the political representation system on minority media. The influence of the minority political framework is perceptible in Hungary. The self-government system set up in 1993-94 accounts for a number of minority publications and programs currently available (it gave the newly recognized minorities the means and the incentives to establish them). As competition is developing between minority organizations vying for the role of 'official' representatives of each minority, divisions within some groups have become politicized, resulting in greater potential for the 'capture' of minority media outlets by factions. The phenomenon is already visible in the Hungarian Roma community and, to a lesser extent, in a few other larger communities.

## **5.2 Parallel and integrated minority media strategies**

The paper concentrated on state strategies and policies towards minority media. This angle of treatment does not aim to underplay the presence and significance of other minority media initiatives not supported by public funds. Rather, given the reality of minorities in Slovenia and Hungary, as well as the available information, such an approach allows to draw the contours

minority media systems relatively precisely; it also provides a useful basis to compare them across minority groups and countries

It emerges that the strategy privileged by Slovenia and Hungary is predominantly one of 'parallel media' rather than integration of minority content into mainstream outlets. This is most clear in Slovenia, where only the Hungarian television program is aired on a mainstream channel – the first channel of RTV Slovenia. The policy is largely a continuation of the framework already in place when Slovenia was Yugoslav republic. In Hungary, the approach is more mixed: print minority media are separate outlets, while radio and television programs are integrated Hungarian Public Radio and Television programming. Evidently, states' approaches are partly dictated by minorities' situations and resources. However, as mentioned above, minority 'hard facts' do not tell the whole story.

### **5. 3 Functions of minority media: a cautious assessment**

Based on Murdoch's (1992), Higgins' (1992) and Husband's (1994) contributions, a number of minority media functions were identified in the introductory part of the paper: the symbolic, minority identity preservation, and participative functions. The first function corresponds to the need to express a collective, distinct minority identity; the second to the maintenance of this identity and the third one to the empowerment of minorities via access to diverse information, interpretations and images of the common reality, in which minority groups recognize themselves and which they can shape. The following paragraphs examine whether and how these functions apply to the Hungarian and Slovenian cases.

#### *5.3.1 The symbolic function*

Both countries have an explicit, elaborate strategy of supporting minority media. As a result, the symbolic function of minority outlets is largely achieved, at least for the minority groups targeted by support policies. The symbolic function is particularly prominent in the eyes of Hungarian interviewees. In Slovenia, the function is realized to a different extent across minority groups. It is arguable whether it is fulfilled in the case of new minorities groups (clearly not for groups that do not have an outlet, and those that benefit only from an online presence or an irregular publication).

### *5.3.2 The preservation of minority identity function*

The Hungarian minority self-government framework now encompasses the largest part of the minority press (elected national minority self-governments publish most 'national' minority papers/magazines; overlaps between the roles of minority representatives and minority media editors/journalist are not uncommon). The explicit goal of the framework, which treats all minorities equally, is to protect and promote cultural autonomy. Higgins's definition of minority media function, namely the preservation of cultural and linguistic identities (similar to the identity preservation function), applies rather well to this structure.

Is the preservation objective achieved by the Hungarian system? Minority media journalists and editors voiced repeatedly that public resources are scarcely sufficient to maintain current media activities. In the case of public television, even maintaining programs is problematic in the context of low, not transparent budgets subject to variations. It can be argued that the current state of minority media in Hungary contributes to preserve the identity of minorities; however, the system still has to demonstrate that it can live up to its objective to go further and promote minority identity culture.

The well-developed support structure and content of Italian and Hungarian minority media secures minority identity preservation. As in the case of minorities in Hungary, whether this impacts significantly on assimilation, one of Higgins' main concerns (1992 a; b), is difficult to assess. The data considered in this study is not informative enough with respect to the impact of minority media support strategies on assimilation trends. However, many minority media journalists and editors point out to the crucial role of the minority media - education in minority language tandem to safeguard minority identity.

In spite of their limited presence, it appears that Roma outlets in Slovenia play a role, not so much in preserving Roma identity but in promoting it. This is clearer in the case of the Roma radio program aired by the regional Murski Val Radio station. In addition to the known obstacles to the development of the Roma media scene (e.g. socio-economic, organization problems; collective rights less clearly defined than those of Hungarians and Italians; problems in implementation of those rights in the field of political representation, as shown by the case recently brought in front of the Supreme Court), the grant process of the Department for Minority Cultural Activities does not facilitate the tasks of Roma minority initiatives. Also the only institution that includes new minorities groups in the minority media funding structure, the Department makes funds available only upon presentation of projects' results (i.e. receipts are required). This imposes a greater burden

on groups more recently introduced in structure, i.e. Roma and new minorities, and reinforces their initial disadvantage. (Avowedly, the Roma obtain less than their 'fair share' of the Department for Minority Cultural Activities resources due to the group's lack of organization and mobilization.)

### *5.3.3 The participative function*

The available data is also insufficient to measure exactly whether and to what extent existing minority media enable citizens to take interest in the affairs of their community, go to vote for minority leaders and participate to public life in general. Minority media effects, like any other media effects, are difficult to isolate. Consequently, the following considerations weigh the *potential* of minority media support structure with respect to minority empowerment. For the less well-endowed minorities in Hungary, the participative potential of minority outlets is limited. However, since the mid-1990s, the wider setting of the self-government system (however imperfect) in which many minority media outlets are integrated, has been giving an unprecedented opportunity to hundreds of minority groups members to participate actively to the public sphere and gain greater awareness of their rights (Walsh 2000, 24). On the other hand, the system has made more relevant the issue of capture of minority outlets by factions competing for the control of self-government. With less than ten years of existence, it is yet early to tell whether the Hungarian minority self-government system will foster a 'revival' of minority media and turn them into tools of empowerment or, on the contrary, stifle them through their subordination to the interests of small, not necessarily representative groups within minorities.

In Slovenia, the participative potential of minority media differs again across groups. In the light of the information presented in this paper, it is possible to conclude that Italian and Hungarian outlets' carry a significant participative potential. This is not the case for other minority groups, at least not yet.

An element common to both countries which limits the potential of the three minority media functions tackled here is the relative weakness of support structures for minority media at the local level. In Hungary, local minority self-governments are highly dependent on local authorities to fund their activities, including media initiatives. This has proved a significant obstacle to the good functioning of self-governing system since its first days. While the Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities funds local media, its limited budget hardly allows it to act as a substitute to active municipal support. In Slovenia, the groups which are in need of greater local level support are less regionally concentrated than the Hungarian and Italian communities, thus making local

media initiatives even more difficult to launch. In the case of Roma, the full implementation of the provisions pertaining to Roma representation on local councils in ethnically mixed communities may provide a positive impulse for the support of local media in the near future. At the moment, such initiatives are largely dependent on the local authorities' good will. For new minorities, an official status of minority groups is likely to constitute an essential pre-condition to the development of local as well as country-wide media outlets beyond the actual, very limited framework.

In the two countries considered, changes to the general aspect of the minority media scene could well happen in a not so distant future. Ten years ago, Hungary introduced a new framework applied to a 'stable' minority situation (absence of threat of demographic change, of significant pressures for status or funds, of political claims by minorities, etc.). It is often noted that one of the intentions of the Hungarian government was to give itself a good bargaining position vis-à-vis its neighbors where large Hungarian minorities live, and that at relatively low costs (see for example Walsh 2000, 20-2). At this point, eventual changes to the Hungarian minority media support structure are more likely to come from modifications to the larger self-government framework and/or a reallocation of resources towards it than to minority media strategy itself. Also, an improvement to the financial and political situation of Hungarian Radio and Television public broadcasting network could only have a positive impact on minority programs. In Slovenia, an almost reverse situation applies: the political changes at the beginning of the 1990s and the resulting changes to the minority landscape in the new country has been putting pressures on the existing structures which, according to some interviewees, are slowly starting to adjust. A further push for change to minority media support structure, notably towards the enlargement (*de jure* as well as *de facto*) of the minority media framework may be the European Union integration process.

## 6. Recommendations

In the light of the information included in this study with respect to the support structures of minority media in Slovenia and Hungary, the following considerations could help to improve them as well as maintain their positive features:

- Recognition of new minorities as full-fledged minority groups in Slovenia, with rights similar to those of already recognized groups and media resources commensurate to their needs at all levels (including in broadcasting);
- Particular effort should be directed at the eradication of prejudices towards Roma (and new minorities groups in Slovenia) in mainstream media. A minority media strategy promoting and supporting outlets with similar goals to those of the Roma Press Center in Budapest (a Roma news agency) could contribute to achieve this;
- Ensuring country-wide presence of minority, notably Roma, content in mainstream television and radio in both countries. Make this presence more visible in Hungary, where the current Roma and other minority programs are aired at times when they are unlikely to reach a significant audience.
- The resolution of the crisis in Hungarian public broadcasting would contribute to reduce constraints on minority programs. Grant more control to minorities (notably to the groups sharing the program called 'Rondo') over programs content of programs aired by the public television and devote more resources to their production.
- Greater effort directed at securing support from localities for minority media. The creation of incentives for local authorities to contribute to minority media initiatives would be welcome (notably, a more active role for local minority self-government/self-governing communities in local affairs could give minorities more leverage to obtain cooperation and support);
- Careful monitoring of the full implementation of representation of Roma in local councils in Slovenia in the view of stimulating local cooperation between minorities and local authorities in the field of media;
- In Hungary, adopt and enforce mechanisms to make local mainstream media comply with minority content targets;
- Introducing accountability mechanisms for national minority self-governments in Hungary, including for their media activities;

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## Summary

This paper maps out and compares minority media systems (number; organizational and funding structures; main actors involved, etc.) in Hungary and in Slovenia. Based on original interview data gathered in both countries in Fall 2002, the research describes how many and what kind of minority media operate, and in what context. Focusing on the state - minority media actors dynamics, it presents the main elements of the legal and institutional basis determining the resources minority media have access to, and what use minority media professionals make of it.

The strategies adopted by both countries towards minority media is mainly one of 'parallel media', although elements of integration of minority content to mainstream media are also present, notably in Hungary. The results of the study show that the general support structure of minority media in Slovenia is more developed than the one in place in Hungary, where the input of public resources is comparatively lower. However, Slovenia presents a highly uneven minority media landscape; some of its minority groups (Italians and Hungarians) benefit from a relatively diverse and dynamic media offering, while other groups have little or even no outlet at their disposition.

Finally, the paper discusses the potential of Slovenian and Hungarian minority media to contribute to the expression and preservation of minority identities as well as to minority empowerment.

The findings of the research are relevant for students, researchers and policy makers concerned with minority identity, representation and participation issues, and the quality of democracy in general in multiethnic societies.